

opinion that Thomas of Canterbury was a false traitor and damned in hell. There are innumerable other charges of a like nature against various men and women of East Norfolk and Suffolk. One of their beliefs, at any rate, was not very far from the truth : * William Wright deposeth that it is read in the prophecies of the Lollards, that the sect of the Lollards shall be in a manner destroyed; notwithstanding at length the Lollards shall prevail and have the victory against all their enemies.¹ *

Heresy was strong not only in Norfolk and Suffolk, but in Essex, especially in Colchester. The Bishop of London, who had jurisdiction here, supported the noble efforts of his brother of Norwich, by burning the parish priest of Manuden, in Essex, and a woolwinder of London city. The Lollardry of the Eastern Counties had suffered a severe blow, for not only had the leaders been burnt, but the rank and file of the congregations had been forced to recant by the score, and each of them knew that if he resumed his old courses he would be burnt as a relapsed heretic without the opportunity of recantation. Nevertheless, as appeared in the sequel, the religion did not die out in those parts.²

One effect of these persecutions was to bring Lollard conspiracy again to a head. In May and June 1431, immediately after the persecution in East Anglia, a series of pamphlets was widely distributed through the towns of England, calling for the disendowment of the Church. It was proposed to apply the confiscated property, partly to the maintenance of the poor, and partly, as the Commons had suggested in 1410, to the endowment of more landed nobility and gentry. It is unnecessary to point out that on the very eve of the Wars of the Roses it was preposterous to suggest an increase in the numbers and wealth of those who kept retainers and practised maintenance. There could be no serious question of such a use for Church property until the first Tudors had crushed the harmful power of the nobles. Several persons were hanged for connection with the pamphlets before any actual disorder had taken place. However willing

¹ Foxe, iii. 594-7. « *Ibid*, iii 584-600; *Blu& Book*, 1883, Ecclesiastical Courts, 64-61 see A.p. .